



Lavender Notes

*Improving the lives of LGBT older adults
through community building, education, and advocacy.*

January 2017

Celebrating 22+ years of service and positive change

Volume 24, Issue 1

[Stories of Our Lives, January 2017](#)

Rev. Trinity Ann Ordon, PhD

Long-time Filipina lesbian activist, Trinity Ordon, was born in San Diego in 1951, the sixth of thirteen children, to a U.S. Navy WWI veteran and his wife, a talented seamstress who made the clothes for all of their children.

"My hard working father - like the Black and Latino Navy men of the time - was restricted to the ship's galley for all of his working life," Trinity recalls. "I think of those vessels as 'floating plantations' where the racial hierarchy - like the 19th Century U.S. South - was unquestioned. After he left the U.S. Navy, though, he worked in the U.S. Navy Hospital kitchen where he had a stable job and income for his wife and family."



Trinity - age 6, 1957



Trinity - age 18, 1969

Trinity describes her childhood as a delightful "growing up as a group" with all 13 learning to take care of each other and share household responsibilities early on in life.

"Think of a cat with a litter of adorable kittens," Trinity reminisces. "We slept 3 or 4 to a bed - always warm and secure - thinking for many years that all families were surely like ours. We went regularly to Catholic Church and all attended Catholic school; we were a tightly-bonded family."

After graduating from Rosary High School in San Diego, she received a scholarship to Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles and then proceeded up the coast to UC-Santa Cruz, where she spent one year. She wound up at UC-Berkeley, earning a degree in Asian-American History at age 22, after which she taught classes in Philippine History and Community Organizing at Laney College. Much later in life, she earned a Ph.D. in History of Consciousness at UC-Santa Cruz and received her theological training at the Church of Natural Grace.

Though she had dated a few boys in high school ("not taken care about"), she only acted on her attraction for women after college and in the context (and safety) of becoming involved with the leader of the KDP (Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino) - the Union of Democratic Filipinos. Though both Trinity and her girl-friend were doseted in the organization, it was an "open secret," making it semi-safe for her to be in a lesbian relationship for the first time.

"Though my family - particularly my parents - weren't initially supportive of my political activities," she recalls, "during the 13 years of martial law in the Philippines under Marcos, my mother's politics became more liberal and eventually my father and siblings followed. They could see that action was called for to deal with tyrants and injustice. Meanwhile, my siblings had paved the way - by converting to other religions, marrying outside of the Church or living with their boyfriends - so that the potential bombshell of my sexuality became, comparatively, 'small potatoes'."



Trinity as an activist in her 40s.

Dealing with sexuality with family and friends, though, was a process that took place over time.

"I prefer to think of it as 'bringing people into my life' rather than 'coming out' to them," Trinity explains. "And after I met Desiree, it was important to me that there be no more secrets between me and the people I loved most."

The couple first met in 1985 while Trinity was visiting a sister in Hawaii. Though there was an instant connection, it was 18 months before they actually began acting on it. Desiree - who self-describes as being of Japanese-Chinese-Hawaiian-German ancestry - moved to San Francisco in May 1987. After attending a "Lesbians Choosing Children" workshop at the Women's Building, they decided they should make a commitment to each other and have a solid financial footing before they embarked on such a major project as parenthood together.

The two feminists discussed what form that commitment would take. They wanted to become "June brides" in 1988, even though lesbian marriages weren't quite "sanctioned" yet. Only after Trinity told her mother that she was going to marry Desiree and asked her to put her seamstress talents to work making her a Filipino wedding dress (with butterfly Maria Clara sleeves), then her mother was supportive.

"But when Mom offered to make both of our dresses, I knew everything was really OK, from then, on."



The Ordon-Thompson Wedding on June 25, 1988

Desiree's brother did come to the wedding and eight of Trinity's family were on hand for the celebration, including her parents. (A slow but steady thaw was needed with Desiree's parents; they eventually visited them in San Francisco many years later after the wedding.)

"In the meantime, I invited my boss at UCSF to the wedding," Trinity recalls, "and that's all it took to give everyone on the staff the green-light to know I was a lesbian. I didn't really have to 'come out' to anyone. Just like telling my mother - who surely informed other family members who might not have known - that they had an invitation to come into our lives, as well!"

Trinity's 45-year history of civil rights activism has included linking international, national and local Asian and Pacific Islander LGBT people in the U.S. with counterparts around the world. She has co-founded and/or served on numerous organizations, receiving several awards for her community work in the Asian and Pacific Islander queer community. These include the Lesbian of Achievement, Vision and Action Award (Bay Area Community Women), Chancellor's Award for Public Service (UCSF), Individual Historic Achievement Award (Gay and Lesbian Historical Society of Northern California) and the Phoenix Award (to both Desiree and Trinity) from APIQWTC (Asian Pacific Islander Queer Women & Transgender Community) in 2008.

From 1994-2005, Trinity promoted culturally-appropriate "coming out" processes for the API community, advocating acceptance and reconciliation within the families of API queer people. This included written and videographic materials, plus creation of API Family Pride (APIFP), a non-profit organization that provides cultural/linguistic support and resources to families of API LGBT people. A simple, effective, widely-used "Coming Out / Coming Home" video is available at www.APIFamilyPride.org to facilitate the process in culturally-appropriate ways.



Desiree (in purple shirt) and Trinity (in the white dress) accepting the Phoenix Award from APIQWTC, April 2008

Since 2000, Trinity has been a member of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies Department at City College of San Francisco (CCSF), where she teaches classes on lesbian relationships, lesbian communities and LGBT communities of color in the U.S. She plans to retire from CCSF in December 2017. Trinity has also been on the faculty at SFSU, JFK University and the California Institute for Integral Studies where she has taught and guest lectured on social movements, history, culture, politics, health and relationships as related to communities of color, Asian and Pacific Islanders and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people.

From 2000-03, Trinity was Associate Director of the Lesbian Health and Research Center at UCSF, where she conducted health policy research on Asian American women, culture, family and sexuality. She also served as Co-Chair of the Women's and Girls' Health Advisory Commission to the Office of Women's Health, San Francisco Department of Public Health. Trinity has made presentations on these topics in community and academic venues across the U.S., in Canada, Japan, India and the Philippines.



Trinity Has Passport; Will Travel

Since 2003, in addition to her activist and academic endeavors, Trinity has studied alternative healing modalities, focusing her work with survivors of sexual violence. After completing an 18-month Vipassana Buddhist meditation and dharma study and a two-year seminary program in psychic healing arts, Trinity helps people learn how to heal from deep-seated difficult

emotions and dysfunctional behaviors based in present and past life traumas. She teaches basic healing techniques through classes and workshops, in individual and group sessions, for those seeking body-mind spiritual-emotional healing and transformation. She also offers community workshops and individual sessions as a spiritual counselor and psychic reader through a joint enterprise with her sister, Francesca, Inner Beauty Healing™ with information available on their website: www.innerbeautyhealing.us.

p.s. Exactly 20 years after their June wedding in 1988, Trinity and Desiree fluffed up those beautiful wedding dresses - hand-made by Trinity's Mom - ambled briskly over to San Francisco City Hall on June 25th, 2008, and officially became one of the 18,000 LGBT couples legally married before the November passage of Proposition 8 and the subsequent series of lawsuits finally overturning that Proposition as being unconstitutional. Let's hear it for Trinity and Desiree!

In Remembrance



Susan Levinkind, 74, a generous and loving spouse, friend, mother and grandmother, died on October 29, 2016, of Lewy body dementia with an accompanying seizure disorder. Born in Holyoke, Massachusetts, she received her library degree from Columbia, and J.D. from Western New England College of Law. She worked first as a librarian in New York and Amherst, Massachusetts, and then as "the lesbian lawyer" of Northampton.

In 1989 she moved to California, where she worked as a legal librarian for California Rural Legal Assistance and the Superior Court of San Jose, as well as being "the lesbian tax mom" for over 100 clients after her "retirement." A life-long activist, she took her daughter, Andrea, to Vietnam War and anti-nuke protests, and participated in environmental, anti-racist and feminist organizing.

She was always active in promoting lesbian visibility. She did so by working to ensure Northampton would have an LGBT march in the 1980s despite official opposition, performing tireless office work for the journal *Sinister Wisdom*, co-organizing the senior and disabled services for the San Francisco Dyke March, and, after 60, tirelessly promoting Bay Area and National Old Lesbians Organizing for Change.

She was one of the recipients of the legendary Pat Bond Old Dykes Award for her many contributions to community. She is survived by her loving spouse, Elana Dykewomon, her daughter, Andrea Cook, her son-in-law Scott Cook, and grandsons Sam and Adam.

She graced the Lavender Seniors luncheon and memorial gatherings and proudly wore a "No on Prop 8" magnetic sign on both sides of her car. Even after the message did not prevail at the elections, she continued to state her opposition to the inequality directed towards the LGBTQ community.

She wore multi colored hues in her hair likely to signify her embrace of multicultural diversity in the community. She was so multicultural in her activism that we invite and welcome her diverse community of friends to comment on their mutual experiences so that we may come to recognize the full contribution to our community of this remarkable person.

Book Review:

Boy Erased: A Memoir

By Garrard Conley

From time to time we need to pay attention to our rural folks in America and what gays and lesbians are forced to battle.

Conley was raised in small town Arkansas. His family was strict and fundamentalist. They decided to have a conservative psychiatrist treat him. An outfit known as "Love in Action" declares war on the LGBT community.

The parents are kept isolated from their lavender child. They are to blame for his or her homosexuality. Conley's father was a Baptist minister.

By the end of this sad tale, Conley is still sorting out his love life and freeing himself from Southern tyranny.

This is another stimulating history of homophobia in the old South.

- Frank Howell



CARA Alert - December 15, 2016

A publication of the California Alliance for Retired Americans.

**Happy Holidays to You.
Get Ready for a Wild 2017!**

Although many of us are still in shock from the elections and wondering what is going to happen to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, women's rights, immigrants' rights, workers' rights and human rights - as well as other essential programs and policies, now is not the time to give up.

It is the time to fight back. And that is what CARA is gearing up to do.

**National CALL-IN Day to Congress - January 4th
Hands Off Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security
Protect, Improve and Expand these Programs - NO Cuts**

The Republican leadership has promised to take up the Ryan budget proposals that would voucherize Medicare and block grant Medicaid, and begin to privatize Social Security for future generations as their first order of business. We need to let them know that

WE ARE NOT GOING TO LET THIS HAPPEN!

**Using this toll free number (866-828-4162)
call your Congressional Representative and tell them:**

My name is _____ and I am a constituent from your district. I am calling to tell you that I am expecting you to fight against any proposals to cut, privatize, or limit America's most essential social programs - Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. These programs must be protected, improved and expanded - not cut. I depend on these programs, I earned them, and I could not live without them - just as millions of other Californians do. I am counting on you to represent my interests and those of my friends, family and colleagues in your district. I am watching you and how you vote on these critical programs. Thank you.

Then, call U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris with the same message at THIS NUMBER 866-220-0044 (different from above).

SAVE the DATE!

**CALIFORNIA DAY OF ACTION TO PROTECT, IMPROVE, AND EXPAND
MEDICARE AND MEDICAID**

Friday, January 27th, 2017

1pm meet at Yokuts Park, 4200 Empire Dr. Bakersfield

2pm Rally and demonstration at Congressman McCarthy's Office

4100 Empire Dr. Suite 150, Bakersfield

Congressman McCarthy is the House Majority Leader, and is responsible for moving the Republican agenda forward in the House of Representatives. He is a well-known supporter of privatization and reducing spending on programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. We need to show up by the thousands on January 27th to let him know that we expect him to represent his constituents (50% of the residents in Kern County depend on Medicaid, Medicare or both for their health care). We also will demand that he move the House Majority toward protecting, improving and expanding these programs.

We will have buses leaving from various locations around California. Call CARA toll free at 877-223-6107 to reserve a space (tell us what location you want to leave from). Some of the locations so far are:

Los Angeles County - (Central, Southeast, Ontario area)

Orange County

Fresno Area

Modesto

Stockton

Monterrey/Central Coast

Santa Clara/San Benito counties

Bay Area

You can contact CARA at:

CARA, 600 Grand Ave. #410, Oakland, CA 94610

NORTH: 510-663-4086 / 510-663-4099 (fax)/ jreid@californiaalliance.org

SOUTH: 714-488-5488/ Vishnu@californiaalliance.org

TOLLFREE 1-877-223-6107 / www.californiaalliance.org



*NEW CONSERVATORY THEATRE CENTER
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2016-2017 Season Presentations

- + AVENUE Q Dec 2, 2016 - Jan 15, 2017
Music, Lyrics and Original Concept by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx, book by jeff Whitty
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West Coast Premiere
by Michael McKeever
- + LEAVING THE BLUES Mar 3- April 2, 2017
A Play with Music by Jewelle Gomez
World Premiere
- + EVERYTHING THAT'S BEAUTIFUL March 17 - April 23, 2017
by Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder
World Premiere
- + SORDID LIVES May 12 - Jun 11, 2017
by Del Shores
SF Premiere
- + WARPLAY Jun 2- Jul 2, 2017
by JC Lee
World Premiere

Subscription Packages provide heavy discounts.

Go to <http://www.nctcsf.org/shows/subscribe> for more details.

25 Van Ness Ave. San Francisco, CA 94102

415.861.8972

San Leandro Pot Luck

January 14, noon-2:00pm

All Saints Episcopal Church, 911 Dowling, San Leandro

Political Science Professor, Al Schendan of San Jose State will be speaking on the political climate upcoming.

We are looking for ideas that may pique the interest of Lavender Seniors participants, send your suggestions to info@lavenderseniors.org.



LGBT Online Support Group for Caregivers

If you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender and caring for someone with ongoing health problems . . . **you are not alone!** Family Caregiver Alliance's online LGBT Caring Community Support Group connects you with others facing the day-to-day challenges of caregiving. If you're assisting someone with Alzheimer's, stroke, Parkinson's, traumatic brain injury, or other chronic health problems, you can get support from the convenience of your home.

Share experiences, resources, and ideas in a supportive, caring environment. Available 24 hours a day, all you need is e-mail, and it's free! Visit www.caregiver.org.



Community Phone Calls

Just a few of the things offered:

Open Mic Thursdays, 1/5 6:30pm - 7:00pm All are welcome to call in and perform, big talent not required. Singing, spoken word, stand-up comedy, play your favorite instrument, read a poem or more. Enthusiastic spectators are also welcome to join. Facilitated by Kathleen Torres

Cultural Literacy Meltdown Fridays, 1/6 5:00pm - 5:45pm Cultural literacy is the phrase coined by educators to describe a body of knowledge held in common by those brought up in a society. Few know every item but most of us know something about most subjects. Each week, we will pick thirty or so subjects from the Dictionary of Cultural Literacy to see what we know as a group. Participants are encouraged to bring topics of their own Facilitated by Lynn Rayburn

Writing Workshop Sundays, 1/1, 1/8 3:00pm - 4:00pm Join this peer group for supportive discussions and invite suggestions and feedback about what you are writing. Plus exercises to get those creative juices flowing! Participants are invited to offer ideas for writing exercises. Facilitated by Jerry Sexton

View the **Fall catalog** of community phone calls [here](#). Winter catalog should be coming out mid month check the website [here](#) for updates. To participate in these or other Senior Center Without Walls (SCWW) telephone activities, or to learn more about SCWW programs, call 877-797-7299 or email info@seniorcenterwithoutwalls.org.

DUCAL COUNCIL OF ALAMEDA COUNTY INC BESTOWS AWARD TO LAVENDER SENIORS OF THE EAST BAY

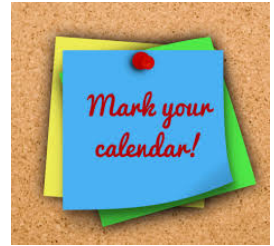
Sat Dec 17, 2016

Festive in Christmas decorations, the World Famous Turf Club in Hayward was the venue of the Ducal Council of Alameda County, Inc. hosting awards and celebration of the season for various LGBTQ organizations contributing to the vibrancy of the community. Lavender Seniors received a major donation as did The East Bay Gay Men's Chorus and The Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa County.

Ducal Council host Don Silva (Mama P) with his partner Bill Baillie also celebrated 50 years of partnership and are part of

the original pioneer and founders of the Lavender Seniors. The Ducal Council's drag show featured many talented performers and the song and dances were interspersed with beautiful auction items and raffle prize give-aways. A home-made dinner and dessert plate offering was warm, welcomed, delicious and filling.

Through the years, the Ducal Council of Alameda County, Inc. has generously given to the Lavender Seniors to help sustain its programs and innovations. We are grateful for the continued support of this distinguished leadership organization.



THIS MONTH'S EVENTS

Out Standing Seniors, Hayward

January 3 & 17 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.(1st and 3rd Tuesdays)

Hayward Senior Center, 22325 N. Third Street, Hayward

A safe and confidential space for LGBTQ seniors 50+ to share thoughts, feelings, resources, information, and support. FREE, though donations are welcome.

Queerly Aging Lesbians

January 5 & 19, 1:30 p.m. (1st and 3rd Thursdays)

The Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Avenue (at Derby), Berkeley

Find support and like-minded wonderful people!

Rainbow Seniors

January 10 & 24 12:30-2:00 (2nd & 4th Tuesdays)

San Leandro Senior Center, 13909 E 14th St, San Leandro

A safe and confidential space for LGBT seniors 50+ to share thoughts, feelings, resources, information, and support.

FREE, though donations are welcome.

Lavender Seniors Advisory Board Meeting

January 11, 6:00-8:00 p.m. (Wed before San Leandro Potluck Lunch)

All Saints Episcopal Church, Fireside Room, 911 Dowling, San Leandro 94578

A portion of this meeting is open to the public.

Senior Men's Group

January 12 & 26 1:30 p.m. (2nd and 4th Thursdays)

The Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley

Co-sponsor: The Pacific Center, 510-548-8283

Feel alone? Need to find space to be yourself and chat with others? Join us!

San Leandro Potluck

January 14, noon-2:00pm

All Saints Episcopal Church, 911 Dowling, San Leandro 94578

Come relax for a couple of hours. Share the love, meet others, talk and laugh!

This month's program: Political Science Professor, Al Schendan of San Jose State speaking on the political climate upcoming.



Lavender Seniors Film Series

No film this month

San Leandro Library is closed this month for renovation, film will resume next month.

Our Space Intergenerational Community Dinner

January 19, 5:30-7:00 p.m. (3rd Thursday of each month)

Our Space, 22245 Main St in Hayward

Contact stephanie@baycyouth.org for information

Oakland Lunch Bunch

Sponsored by City of Oakland Aging & Adult Services

January 20, 12:00-2:00 p.m. (3rd Friday of each month)
North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland
This month's program: (to be announced)

Women caring for their woman partners

Every other Friday at 1pm

Please R.S.V.P. to Patricia at patricia@LavenderSeniors.org (510) 574-2091

Facilitated by Dr. Shannon Dubach

2041 Bancroft Way, Suite 307 Berkeley

If you are a woman caring for a sick elderly or disabled woman partner, join us.

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay Board of Advisors

Chair:

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Editor: Beckie Underwood

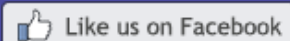
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Victor Aguilar Jr.

Lavender Seniors

is a project of

LIFE ElderCare



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